the machinery could not be mobilized, as the State Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh had not yet giving permission for the sale of surplus lands.

In the above scenario with a view to quicken the revival process, the Government has proposed to BIFR to permit modernization of the 15 mills in the first instance and to attempt modernization through a strategic private partner in other mills. Government has also approved the NTC proposal to offer VRS in mills where there is a demand for the same from employees.

Production of export quality tea in Uttaranchal

*40. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that export quality tea is produced in Uttaranchal;

(b) if so, the action plan Government are formulating with the collaboration of the State Government to enhance the production thereof;

(c) whether any target has been set for the production of export quality tea in Uttaranchal by the end of the ongoing Five Year Plan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the assistance to be provided by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of Uttaranchal has established a Tea Development Board for the development of tea indsutry in the State. Tea Board has also set up an office at Almora to provide guidance and financial assistance for various developmental activities. For enhancing the production of tea in Uttaranchal, the State Government has identified 9000 hectares for planting tea over a period of 15 years commencing from 2003. Processing factories are proposed to be set up with the involvement of private entrepreneurs. Further, in order to rejuvenate the old tea areas in the State, the Uttaranchal Tea Development Board has set up a committee of which an official of the Tea Board is also a member.

(c) No specific target has been set for the production of export quality tea in Uttaranchal by the end of the ongoing Five Year Plan.

(d) The estimated outlay for planting tea in the identified area of 9000 hectares is around Rs. 480 crores. during the 10th Plan period, Tea Board is extending subsidy as admissible under its Tea Plantation Development Scheme for the area to be planted. Financial support is also being extended by the Tea Board for setting up of self-help groups by the small tea growers. Tea Board has also provided a grant for setting up a Tea Research Station at Govind Ballav Pant University, Pant Nagar.

Amendments in Patent Act vis-a-vis TRIPS Agreement

156. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Swiss delegation headed by the Head of Bilateral Economic Relations (Jorg Al Reding) visited New Delhi;

(b) if so, whether they pressed for certain amendments to the Patent Act, so as to bring India within the ambit of the new regime stipulated in the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreements of the WTO; and

(c) what are the specific amendments demanded by the delegation and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) During its visit to India in October 2004, the Swiss delegation was informed about the efforts made by India to put in place an intellectual property regime compalying with obligations under the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual property Rights (TRIPS) and also the initiatives taken to modernise the intellectual property administration. The Swiss side appreciated the initiatives taken by India in the field of IPR's but expressed general concern that some Swiss companies continue to face some problems with respect to intellectual property rights in India. Subsequently, an amendment to the Patents Act, namely, the Patents (Amendment) Ordinance, 2004, effective from January 01, 2005 was promulgated on December 26, 2004 to, inter-alia; comply with India's international obligations contained in the TRIPS Agreement which were due from January 01, 2005. This